

TRIBUTE LINDA HIRVONEN

**HON. BART STUPAK**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 10, 2006*

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize an outstanding individual who has dedicated the last nine years of her life to spurring economic growth and development in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Ms. Linda Hirvonen retired at the end of June as Director of the Delta County Economic Development Alliance. During her time there, she worked tirelessly on economic and community development in northern Michigan.

Ms. Hirvonen was critical to business and job growth in Delta County. As of April 2006, there were 2,400 more people in the workforce than when she began in 1997. Ms. Hirvonen assisted 575 individuals and companies looking to start a business or relocate in Delta County. Those statistics are impressive and speak to Ms. Hirvonen's record of success and accomplishment. However, they only tell part of the story. What she will perhaps be remembered for most is the leadership and vision in economic development that she brought to the job and to Delta County.

Ms. Hirvonen is credited by many as coining the term "coopetition," the concept that private businesses should cooperate with each other and with nonprofits to develop the community infrastructure that will facilitate economic growth and lay the foundation for a stable business environment. This concept of "coopetition" has guided Delta County's Economic Development Alliance and the many programs that Ms. Hirvonen developed during her tenure.

Ms. Hirvonen was instrumental in the creation of the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance and served as the Alliance's first president. She saw to the creation of the Bay Area Economic Club and served as the Club's permanent board secretary. She pioneered the creation of Delta Force, the community leadership development program.

A newcomer herself to the area in 1997, Ms. Hirvonen established a program through the Alliance that provides a network of support for newcomers to Delta County. She recognized that for the community to grow, newcomers to the area need to feel welcome. The newcomers unit provided a valuable network for those individuals and businesses that are new to Delta County.

Ms. Hirvonen also led the Alliance's efforts to better assess the needs of existing businesses in the Upper Peninsula. Thanks to her leadership, the Economic Development Alliance implemented the Upper Peninsula Business Barometer, a UP-wide survey of existing businesses to better understand business' needs and strengths.

The overarching goal of the Economic Development Alliance has been to support and assist business creation, growth and expansion in Delta County. Ms. Hirvonen has been tremendously successful in advancing that goal, attracting several businesses to Delta County. She is particularly proud of one new business, Issues and Answers Network. This business came to Delta County in 2001 and, with the Alliance's help, opened two more locations throughout the Upper Peninsula. The company employs 150 people in Escanaba

and, thanks to this expansion, Issues and Answers should employ more than 300 people throughout the Upper Peninsula by the end of this year.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Linda Hirvonen has made it her business to see to business expansion and growth in Delta County and in the Upper Peninsula. Bringing business and economic growth to smaller, rural communities is often challenging. It can only happen when people like Ms. Hirvonen dedicate themselves to the effort. Today, after nine years of distinguished service to her community, I congratulate Ms. Hirvonen on a job well done.

Her husband, Dr. Michael Allkins, recently retired himself. The two of them will now have more time for their mutual pastimes of golf, long walks on sandy beaches and martinis at sunset. To both of them, I say: enjoy, you have earned it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and the House of Representatives join me in congratulating my friend, my constituent, Ms. Linda Hirvonen and thanking her for her hard work and nine years of service to Delta County and Michigan's entire Upper Peninsula.

**SUPPORT FOR EAST TIMOR****HON. BARNEY FRANK**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 10, 2006*

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, several of us in the House are proud of the role we played in helping gain independence for the new nation of East Timor, and we have been pleased by the commitment of the leaders of that new nation to democracy. In particular, we believe that the President, Xanana Gusmao, and the former Foreign Minister and newly-designated Prime Minister, Jose Ramos Horta, have shown a commitment to the maintenance of a fully democratic society. In fact, President Gusmao—widely known and revered by the people of East Timor as Xanana—worked to get a candidate to oppose him in the first presidential election in the country because he wanted to set the right precedent.

It was with great sadness therefore that we watched the violence that wracked this small country in recent weeks, and we believe that it is very important that the responsible leadership of East Timor receive the support they need to make this violence a temporary interruption in their progress as a nation. One very important element in this effort is the United Nations, contrary to those who would dismiss the UN as of no use in today's world. In a recent article in the Boston Globe, Prime Minister Ramos Horta and Raj Purohit make the case that "it is vital that the UN continue to lead an inclusive effort to insure that Timor-Leste (the Portuguese official name for East Timor) becomes a strong democratic member of the international community." In addition to the UN, Australia has played a very constructive role in helping deal with the problems of this new nation.

Mr. Speaker, the recent violence is a sad fact, but it should not lead to pessimism about the longer-term future of East Timor. Instead, members of the international community should heed the words of Jose Ramos Horta and Raj Purohit and support the steps that will

lead to a stable and democratic future for this new nation. In particular, they ask that the new UN Peace Building Commission make East Timor one of the objects of its work, and I hope that this request will be supported by the United States Government and honored by the Peace Building Commission so that, in the words of the authors of this article, we can see that "Timor-Leste finally takes its place among the world's stable democratic countries."

[From the Boston Globe]

JOSE RAMOS HORTA AND RAJ PUROHIT

In recent weeks commentators have framed the uprisings in Timor Leste as a country that has spiraled into violence despite UN peacekeepers. This gives the false impression that the United Nations has failed in the country formerly known as East Timor. The reality is significantly different.

Having declared its independence a mere four years ago, Timor Leste is still a fledgling nation emerging from the aftermath of a long, and often bloody, struggle for freedom. Though citizens have been ably assisted by various UN missions as they attempt to build the country, Timor Leste still has many challenges to overcome. These challenges include speeding up reconciliation, building a democratic political culture, instilling the rule of law, and creating an economy that is able to provide sustainable livelihoods for its people.

While critics correctly note that efforts for reintegration and development must be redoubled, they fail to note that international commitment to long-term peace-building processes must also be redoubled. Peace-building processes that pay attention to a nation's need to feed, employ, govern, and heal itself are essential in any nation-building process. But the world failed to offer sufficient assistance to Timor Leste. The world community, including the United States, moved on to the next failing state before Timor Leste had sufficient strength to stand on its own.

Now we are at the point in Timor Leste's nation-building process where the key stakeholders need to make a calculated assessment of what needs to be done next, coupled with a renewed political and financial commitment to a UN-driven process. Yes, missteps occurred, but this does not demand a radical change of direction nor should nations abandon Timor Leste at this critical juncture.

The first order of business is to address the violence caused by the dismissal of 600 striking soldiers. In the short term, the combination of regional and UN assistance coupled with a commitment from local government officials to address the tension will help dampen the fighting. In the long term, Timor Leste, working with regional governments, in particular Australia, will need to address the broad security challenges underlying the current instability.

Second, and perhaps more significant, it is vital that the UN continue to lead an inclusive effort to ensure that Timor Leste becomes a strong, democratic member of the international community. The UN is the logical body to coordinate this initiative and it seems logical that the new UN Peace Building Commission should play a central role in this effort.

The Peace Building Commission was formed to improve the coordination of relevant actors within and outside the UN and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery. In the case of Timor Leste, the commission should coordinate efforts to ensure that:

There is an aggressive and sustained campaign to improve the livelihood of Timor